1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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traditional, uneducated elite and the ordinary Santal was not nearly so great, nor relations between them so strained.

In addition to the borrowing tendencies which flow from rank concession and the external pressure exerted on encysted societies, there is another centrifugal tendency inherent in being an encysted society: political-judicial encroachment. The increasing jurisdiction of Hindu courts and "village *panchayat*" over affairs formerly handled endogenously are an example; there are also such benefits as the issuance of scholarships, health protection and treatment, digging of tube wells, etc. These encroachments on areas formerly managed by the traditional social organization diminish its authority and importance and serve to attach the Santal more firmly to the surrounding society.

All of the borrowing tendencies which flow from rank concession plus external pressure and encroachment on encysted societies tend to diminish solidarity. If there were no countervailing forces, the world would long ago have become more culturally homogeneous and socially unified than it is. A highly potent force contributing to cultural distinctiveness derives from the necessity of preserving solidarity. Although the basis of solidarity has been widely explored by sociologists and structural anthropologists, there is one condition of solidarity-maintenance which has not received much attention, and it is decisive within the RCS. I refer to the relation between avenues of mobility, or rank paths, as I have called them, and the maintenance of solidarity: some rank paths support solidarity and some undermine or destroy solidarity. Emulation might be assigned to the class of destructive rank paths, but since it is never a successful path in the absence of political and/or economic power, it is not by itself likely to pose a serious threat

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addition to the bride price, to receive a cloth for the bride's mother, one for her father's eldest sister and one each for her two grandmothers.

Some agreement must also be reached about the time of the marriage. This must not take place in the month in which either the bridegroom or bride was born. Formerly, I was told, there was no other prohibition regarding the month. Nowadays, however, the general practice of Hindus in Northern India is followed. Astrologers are not consulted, but marriages may not take place during the rains, and the most popular months are during the spring when the harvest has been gathered in and food is abundant. When the time is approaching, the actual date of the wedding is arranged by the go-between, and the *girṛ* is used to mark off the days remaining.

The whole community in both villages is vitally concerned in the due celebration of the wedding, and this fact is emphasized by the rôle of the village officials. The *jogmaṇjhi* of the bride's village acts as the master of ceremonies from the time when the marriage booths have to be erected until the end. The headman of the bridegroom's village does not take part in the preliminary visits by virtue of his office, but when the two families immediately involved are satisfied that they wish to proceed, both headmen are called in. They have to be present when the engagement is confirmed, and they are consulted about suitable dates. The final "contract" at the climax of the wedding celebrations is entered into by the people of the two villages, and it is made by the respective headmen. The village priest also plays a part, for the community involved in the marriage includes the spirits, who are guardians of the welfare of the tribe, and the ancestors, guardians of family and clan. Their blessing has to be sought. In an interesting passage Dr. Verrier Elwin says of the marriage ceremonial of the tribes of the Maikal hills: "There is little religion in it." On any definition of religion it would be difficult to maintain this thesis with regard to Santal marriage. The whole passage is quoted here, for the rest of what is said does apply in most of its detail to the Santal form of marriage: "We have already spoken of this ceremony as a work of art. There is little religion in it, but it has great social and symbolic value. It is hard to conceive of a better way of impressing on a man and woman their social and sexual union. The tying together of the clothes, the exchange of rings, the first meals together, the ceremonies by the river that symbolize mutual aid in domestic, sexual and food-obtaining activities, are of great significance.